

The Washington Merry-Go-Round

Chilean Military Junta Cracks Down

By Jack Anderson
and Les Whitten

The Pentagon's top man in Latin America, Gen. Denis McAuliffe, turned up in Santiago a few weeks ago. He called upon Chile's military dictator, Gen. Augusto Pinochet, who welcomed him enthusiastically.

The Pentagon representative told Pinochet how "serene and tranquil" Chile had become under military rule. U.S. armed forces, pledged McAuliffe, "will continue to do everything possible to help the Chilean armed forces."

In Washington, meanwhile, a secret national intelligence estimate reported that the military junta had clamped tight, authoritarian controls upon political life in Chile and predicted that the junta would revamp the democratic system.

Marxist parties have been outlawed, and other parties have been placed in involuntary recess. On Nov. 16, we described how the dictatorship has set out to destroy the moderate Christian Democratic Party.

The details were smuggled to us by some of the most respected Christian Democratic leaders in Chile. This crack-down on the democratic parties in Chile, we reported, was known among the generals as the "Paraguayan solution," because it had been successfully imposed on Paraguay by dictator Alfredo Stroessner.

Chile's Ambassador Manuel Trucco fired off an angry letter to us and circulated copies on Capitol Hill. He denied as "absolutely false" that the military rules seek to impose the "Paraguayan solution" upon Chile.

"The Chilean government is not interested in any political system that differs from that indicated in its 'Declaration of Principles,' declared the truculent

Trucco. He cited an article by the British essayist Robert Moss.

Apparently, the ambassador didn't read far enough. For in the article, Moss recounted an interview with Pinochet. "General Pinochet told me," wrote Moss, "that he had come to see Chile's future political system as a 'neo-democracy,' which would appear to mean a system of representative government without political parties."

The junta, for example, made a great show of establishing a special commission to write a new democratic constitution. What has happened to the constitutional commission? The concept has been abandoned and Pinochet has declared there will be no new constitution.

In its place, the junta will proclaim three "constitutional acts" that will effectively abolish democracy. Those who resist will be jailed, terrorized, tortured, exiled and stripped of their property.

The dictatorship is moving against any political, religious or intellectual group that might be able to oppose the Pinochet government. There has been systematic repression of labor unions, political parties, university groups and the Roman Catholic Church.

The Christian Democratic Party, as the most powerful, most popular reformist party in Chile, has become a major target. The Christian Democrats are anti-communist; all they want is democracy in Chile. Clearly, the junta does not.

No matter how loudly Trucco may deny it, this is the "Paraguayan solution," which Stroessner employed to extinguish democracy in Paraguay.

Unfortunately, Americans have a heavy investment in Chile's discredited dictatorship. We reported in March, 1972, that the Central Intelligence Agency had

plotted to undermine the constitutional government of Marxist President Salvador Allende.

This now has been confirmed in ugly detail by the Senate intelligence committee, which revealed that President Nixon personally ordered the CIA campaign against Allende.

Thus the United States helped to overthrow democracy in Chile and establish a repressive dictatorship in its place. The United Nations has charged that the junta, for example, operates "torture centers" in Chile. A U.N. report lists 11 centers where it alleges prisoners are questioned "by methods amounting to torture."

Yet the U.S. government has continued to embrace the Chilean dictatorship. Declares the Senate committee:

—CIA collaborators helped to prepare "an initial overall economic plan that has served as the basis for the junta's most important economic decisions."

—The CIA has assisted the junta "in gaining a more positive image both at home and abroad." Two CIA collaborators helped the junta prepare a "white book" justifying the overthrow of Allende.

—The CIA has established a working relationship with the junta's security and intelligence forces. But in fairness, "the CIA made it clear to the Chileans at the outset that no CIA support would be provided for use in internal political repression."

Now we find that the Pentagon also is tightening its ties with the dictatorship.

Footnote: A spokesman described McAuliffe's trip to Chile as a "routine orientation visit" and characterized his warm remarks as "a general statement of interest and goodwill that would apply to other nations he visits."